

Outside Lawyer Urged in Bug Case

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By Carroll Kilpatrick
Washington Post Staff Writer

The nation's oldest organized bar group yesterday called on President Nixon to appoint an independent lawyer to conduct an objective investigation of the Watergate bugging case.

The present arrangement whereby presidential appointees are conducting the investigation "has resulted in justifiable doubt concerning possible conflict of interest, as well as problems relating to professional ethics," the Association of the Bar of the City of New York said.

Orville H. Schell Jr., president of the 10,000-member group, made up of some of the nation's most influential lawyers, released a letter to the President which he said was delivered at the White House early yesterday.

While the White House had no direct comment on the proposal, press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler said that Mr. Nixon was pursuing his own inquiry and was determined to find out "what happened, how it happened and why it happened."

There were these other developments relating to the Watergate affair:

- Former presidential adviser Robert H. Finch was reported to have declined an offer to return from private life in California to a White House job. A congressional

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Republican leader said Finch told him this week he had received and declined the offer.

- Ziegler denied a Washington Post report that former Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird was asked to conduct a staff reorganization at the White House.

Howard Simons, managing editor of The Post, replied: "We stand by our story."

- Vice President Agnew told a group of Harvard University students that he would "resign and speak out" if he ever found himself in "deep disagreement" with the President on an issue of conscience.

While expressing "utter confidence" in the President, Agnew said, in reply to a question during a meeting in his office with members of the Harvard Republican Club, that if he found himself in disagreement with the President on a matter of conscience "I wouldn't stay here as Vice President and use this as a pulpit to criticize the President. I would resign."

"This doesn't mean that I have any intention of resigning, because I still have confidence that the President has not been involved in a way that would shock my conscience."

- Treasury Secretary George P. Shultz said in an interview with Elizabeth Drew of the Public Broadcasting Service that the Watergate case would not undermine the President's capacity to govern. Shultz said that while Watergate "is a very difficult and unpleasant problem" for the President he will take vigorous action to determine the facts.

- Ziegler again declined to indicate when or how Mr. Nixon would make known his findings, but he repeated his denial that any White House staff resignations had been offered or requested.

- John J. Wilson, an attorney representing presidential aides H. R. (Bob) Halde- man and John D. Ehrlich- man, spent some time at the White House yesterday morning but did not see Mr. Nixon, Ziegler said.

Later, Wilson was seen entering the office of the federal prosecutor in the Watergate case, Earl J. Silbert.

Wilson remained at Silbert's office for about a half hour. On leaving, he said that neither Haldeman nor Ehrlichman had been subpoenaed to appear before the grand jury. Wilson would not say whether the two had been invited to appear.

Ziegler maintained that the President has not talked to anyone about replacing anyone on the White House staff.

The President is continuing his investigation and consulting daily with Assistant Attorney General Henry E. Petersen, Ziegler said,



ROBERT H. FINCH
... said to decline offer

but he added that "the processes of government are going on."

Mr. Nixon's personal involvement in the investigation includes discussions with Petersen, asking staff members to provide information "and consulting with a number of people," Ziegler said.

While Mr. Nixon has held two meetings with Wilson, he does not plan to meet him again, Ziegler said.

For the moment, "the President is not going to state anything that would prejudice the rights of any individual—in fairness to them and the judicial process," Ziegler said.

The letter to the President from the New York City bar association was sent with the unanimous support of the executive committee, Schell said in a telephone interview.

The letter said, "We feel sure that it must have occurred to you that lawyers and laymen alike would have greater confidence if all proceedings were under the independent and direct control of an eminent lawyer, who has no connection with the Department of Justice or any of the persons under investigation."

"We therefore urge you to appoint such special counsel from amongst the numerous leaders of the bar, who could accept such an assignment and discharge their obligation without fear or favor."

Sen. Jacob K. Javits (R-N.Y.), who is a member of the bar association, termed the "most constructive" and said he supported it.

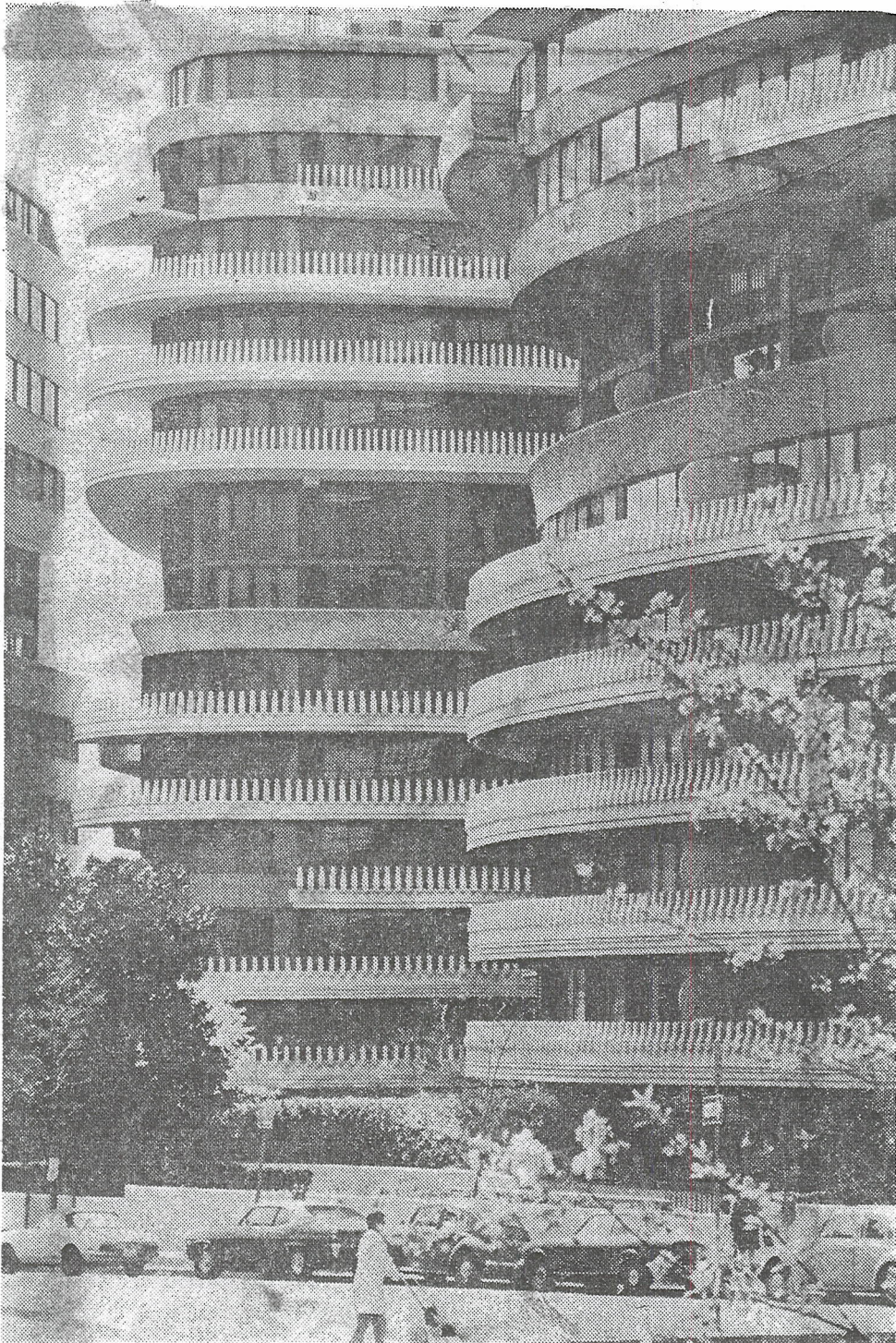
Leadership In Danger, Romney Says

President Nixon "is likely to lose his capacity for leadership" unless he aggressively "proceeds to the truth" of the Watergate bugging and other scandals facing the administration, George Romney said yesterday.

Romney, former secretary of Housing and Urban Development in the Nixon administration, made his comment during a question and answer session at an assembly at Landon School in Bethesda.

"I said last summer that Watergate was, number one, stupid, and number two, reprehensible," Romney said.

"The President has indicated he will proceed to the truth. I think that the President has to be aggressive in doing so. Unless he is, he is simple."



United Press International

THE WATERGATE—It's name, to some, is a code word meaning campaign trickery.